

**Remarks of
ANNETTE M. SANDBERG, ADMINISTRATOR
FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
at the
SMOOTH OPERATOR NEWS CONFERENCE
UPS FACILITY
BURTONSVILLE, MARYLAND
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On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Mineta, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. I congratulate my colleagues in government, law enforcement and trucking on making *Smooth Operator* a great success at curbing aggressive driving and improving safety on our highways.

Across the nation we are observing *National Transportation Week*. This is an excellent time to announce the 2004 campaign for *Smooth Operator*. This is a week when we celebrate how modern transportation has transformed the world.

It's also an ideal time for us to renew our commitment to improving transportation safety — especially to emphasize the dangers of aggressive driving. Today's event gives motorists the chance to learn valuable safety tips around trucks — from the truck driver's perspective.

Highway safety is at the heart of our mission at the USDOT and FMCSA. Our goal is to reduce the fatality rate in all motor vehicle crashes by 41 percent from 1996 to 2008. Last year more than 43,000 people died on nation's roads and highways. Of the victims who were in passenger vehicles, 58 percent weren't wearing safety belts.

Increasing safety belt use nationwide is a high priority for the USDOT and our law enforcement partners. We have many activities across the country to promote this. In particular, Secretary Mineta announced yesterday that Congress is dedicating \$30 million in federal funds for promotion of the *Click It or Ticket* campaign.

This has been a very successful program. Last year, *Click It or Ticket* resulted in a 4-percent nationwide increase in safety belt use. That's great news because it translates into about 1,000 lives saved. So, it's time for all drivers to buckle up.

At FMCSA, we're proud of our involvement in the *Smooth Operator* campaign. It's a true partnership between Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, including 83 law enforcement agencies. Together, you've issued more than 850,000 citations to aggressive drivers since *Smooth Operator* began in 1997.

We're especially pleased to have played such an important role in developing the campaign's truck and bus component. Motor carrier outreach and enforcement is critical to improving traffic safety. Working across jurisdictions with exemplary cooperation and communication, *Smooth Operator* is a model for other such programs throughout the country.

Thank you and congratulations again on a making *Smooth Operator* such a success. Remember that working together, we can all prevent crashes and save lives.